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INFORMATION REPORT

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Gottwald; Possible Cabinet Changes

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- President Benes keeps in touch with Bohumil Lausman, Chairman of the Czechoslovak Social Democratic Party, through an intermediary. Lausman, following his recent conferences with leaders of the National Socialist and People's Parties, received an oral message from Benes encouraging him to continue his activities. The message concluded, however, with the sentence: "I have full confidence in you and in your party, but I want you to know that I also have faith in Mr. Gottwald."

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() Comment: This statement suggests that Benes considers Gottwald to be in a dilemma. Gottwald has stated recently in private conversations that he prefers evolutionary to revolutionary methods in Czechoslovakia and favors a general election in May 1948, but that he is being pressed by the Communist Party to seize control by any means.)

- Social Democratic leaders recently sound out prominent Communists concerning their stand on the holding of elections next May. All those questioned replied that there would be time enough for elections to be held in the autumn. President Benes has stated, however, that he will not sign a decree extending the powers of the present Czechoslovak National Assembly beyond May 1948.

- Two changes are anticipated soon among the Communist members in the Czechoslovak Cabinet: Sverrova may replace Dr. Zdenek Nejedly as Minister for Social Welfare, and Vodicna may replace Vaclav Nosek as Minister for the Interior.

- Chairman Lausman and Secretary General Vilin continue to be in full control of the Social Democratic Party and appear to be working in complete agreement.

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